

TITLE: Omine Guchi Nyonindo Hall Site

Like the other halls along the Nyonin Michi (Women's Pilgrimage Route), the Omine Guchi Nyonindo Hall served as a meeting point and lodging place for travelers until its closure during the early Meiji period (1868–1912). As the name suggests, this *nyonindo* hall served as the gate to Mt. Omine, one of Japan's most sacred mountains, which played an important role in the training of *yamabushi*, or mountain ascetic priests. Mt. Omine is located approximately fifty kilometers east of Koyasan, in Nara Prefecture. For centuries, priests and pilgrims have traveled on foot between the holy mountains for training and as an act of worship.

While the path connecting the Omine Guchi Nyonindo Hall with Koyasan is located only a couple of minutes' walk southwest along the Nyonin Michi, the road that led to Mt. Omine did not branch off from the route at this location. That portion of the trail branched off the Nyonin Michi near the summit of Mt. Mani, in the portion of the route now known as the Koya Sanzan (Three Mountains of Koya) Course. Because the sacred mountains were left in a natural state as a sign of respect, the Omine Guchi Nyonindo Hall was placed farther down the trail, at this location, where travelers would also be closer to supplies and to the temples of Koyasan.